



To: Richmond City Council **Date:** May 21st, 2003
From: Councillor Linda Barnes **File:** 6480-03-01
Acting Mayor, General Purposes Committee
Re: **WILLIAMS ROAD COMMUNITY SHUTTLE – PROPOSED SERVICE PLAN**

The General Purposes Committee, at its meeting held on May 20th, 2003, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

- (1) That the proposed service plan of the Williams Road Community Shuttle for implementation in December 2003 be endorsed.*
- (2) That the use of Railway Avenue (Moncton Street to Williams Road), Williams Road (Railway Avenue to Garden City Road) and Shell Road (Williams Road to Steveston Highway) for new community shuttle service as part of the TransLink 2003 Transportation Plan service changes commencing in December 2003 be endorsed.*
- (3) That staff convey to TransLink, Richmond's request for alternate fuel buses as a pilot project on the Williams Road shuttle route.*

Councillor Linda Barnes, Acting Mayor
General Purposes Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended Parts (1) and (2) only.

Staff Report

Origin

At its regular meeting on January 27, 2003, Council approved the proposed implementation and public consultation process for the new Williams Road community shuttle service. Following completion of its local public consultation in April 2003, TransLink, with input from staff, has developed a proposed service plan and requested City approval to introduce the new community shuttle service on Railway Avenue (Moncton Street to Williams Road), Williams Road (Railway Avenue to Garden City Road) and Shell Road (Williams Road to Steveston Highway). Such requests are TransLink's standard practice to ensure that municipalities are able to comment on possible implications of the use of a particular roadway and to make the resources available for the implementation of bus stop infrastructure and passenger amenities.

As part of the overall design and implementation process for the Richmond Area Transit Plan, Council approval is required to introduce new bus service on these roads. This staff report outlines the routing and frequency of the proposed community shuttle service and presents the results of the public consultation process. This new shuttle service would be introduced in December 2003.

Analysis

1. Proposed Service Plan

The following operating characteristics are proposed for the new community shuttle service.

- *Routing* – The service will generally operate between Steveston Village and the Riverport Entertainment Complex via Chatham Street, No. 1 Road, Moncton Street, Railway Avenue, Williams Road, Shell Road, Steveston Highway, and Entertainment Boulevard (see Attachment 1). This routing will fill in a number of gaps in local transit service by providing new service to areas currently without transit service, such as Williams Road between Railway Avenue and Garden City Road. The recommended routing is intended to provide direct connections to a number of local destinations along the general Williams Road corridor including: Steveston Village, Steveston Community Centre, London Secondary School, Broadmoor Shopping Centre, South Arm Community Centre, McRoberts Secondary School, Coppersmith Place/Ironwood Shopping Centre, and the Riverport Entertainment Complex.
- *Frequency* – The service will operate at 30-minute frequencies daily with the following general hours of operation: weekdays from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm; Saturdays from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm; and Sundays and holidays from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm. Additional evening service will be provided on Fridays and Saturdays generally from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm. The service will be monitored and adjustments made to the hours of operation where appropriate within the allocated resources.
- *Road Geometry* – The geometry of these sections of roadways are adequate to accommodate safe community shuttle operations. TransLink staff determined from a field test that the proposed route is feasible from all service and operational considerations.

- **Bus Stops** – The new service will require the construction of up to 32 new bus stops with landing areas on Railway Avenue, Williams Road and Shell Road. All bus stops will be wheelchair accessible where feasible (e.g., lack of required property may prevent provision of an accessible bus stop).
- **Ridership** – per analysis and market research undertaken during the formulation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan, daily ridership on the service during its first year of operation is estimated at 570 passengers.

2. Proposed Vehicle Type

The community shuttle will be a 24-foot long and 8-foot wide diesel-powered minibus that is wheelchair lift-equipped and seats 20 passengers (or 16 passengers and two mobility aids). TransLink is interested in alternative fuels for its various fleet types and has conducted specific trials of alternative fuels including compressed natural gas (CNG), fuel cell (Ballard technology) and hybrid (diesel-electric). At this time, hybrid appears to provide the best promise for the short-term and TransLink plans to conduct trials with hybrid buses in the next couple of years.

With respect to minibuses, TransLink purchases its fleet through a competitive bidding process that is not fuel specific. To date, the agency has received options for alternative fuels for community shuttle minibuses but these proposals generally have higher vehicle weight, lower passenger capacity, shorter range, shorter projected fleet life, and higher cost. In addition, the complexity of some fuel systems requires infrastructure and maintenance that may be beyond the practical means of many potential service operators. For the present, TransLink believes that diesel fuel provides the most reliable and lowest cost solution. Note that the community shuttle service uses vehicles that are smaller and lighter weight than conventional transit service and thus produce less noise and lower emissions than similar service with standard buses as well as lower emissions than providing similar capacity with single occupant vehicles.

3. Public Consultation Process

TransLink held a two-stage public consultation process jointly with City staff in April 2003 to develop a tentative routing and gain feedback on the proposed routing and service plan. First, a workshop with invited local stakeholders was held April 10th to identify local destinations and travel patterns and develop a proposed routing for the service. Stakeholders from the following community groups were invited to the workshop:

Invited Community Group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steveston Community Society • South Arm Community Association • Richmond Committee on Disability • Richmond Seniors Advisory Council • Minoru Seniors' Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond District Parents Association • Richmond School District • Riverport Business Park • Ironwood Centre / Coppersmith Place • Broadmoor Shopping Centre

Following the identification of a preliminary route for the new service, TransLink held two open houses on April 23rd consisting of display boards showing existing transit services in the area and the proposed community shuttle route and schedule. Advertisements advising of the open houses were placed in the two issues of both local newspapers preceding the event and TransLink also

listed the event in an edition of the *Buzzer*, which is the agency's public newsletter. Details of the open houses were also posted on the websites of TransLink and the City and the City also issued a press release to advise of the event. The open houses were held at the Steveston Hotel from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and at the South Arm Community Centre from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm. TransLink and City staff attended both open houses to answer questions and comment sheets were available for the public to provide further feedback. Approximately one dozen people attended each event.

Attachment 2 contains the comments received by TransLink from the public on the proposed community shuttle service. Overall, the public appears highly supportive of the new service and offered perceptive suggestions on how to improve its operation to serve local residents better. With respect to the two suggested variations on the proposed routing of the shuttle (i.e., via Garry Street or via Seacote Road/King Road/No. 5 Road), both City and TransLink staff believe the route should remain as originally developed for the following reasons:

- routing the shuttle service along Chatham Street, No. 1 Road and Garry Street to Railway Avenue instead of along Moncton Street would preclude a bus stop at the Steveston Community Centre, which is a major destination; and
- routing the shuttle service via Seacote Road and King Road to No. 5 Road instead of along Shell Road would preclude a stop on Steveston Highway in front of Coppersmith Place/Ironwood Centre, which is one of the "anchor" destinations on the route. In addition, conventional bus services (#488 peak period express bus and #401 local bus) already operate along Seacote Road, King Road and No. 5 Road and the #405 local bus also operates along No. 5 Road.

4. Next Steps

The timeline for the remaining activities of the implementation process is:

- May 2003: TransLink and City staff finalize the exact route based on operational requirements and the results of the open houses and identify required new bus stop locations.
- June 2003: TransLink issues Request for Proposal (RFP) to operate the service.
- July-August 2003: TransLink receives and evaluates the RFPs. City initiates construction of the bus stops.
- September 2003: TransLink awards the operating contract.
- October-November 2003: Operator prepares for new service and City completes installation of required bus stops.
- December 2003: Service is implemented.

Financial Impact

The total cost to construct up to 32 bus stops is estimated at \$48,000 and is proposed to be funded from the 2003 Transit Plan Infrastructure Program. The projects will also be submitted to TransLink for 50/50 cost-sharing under TransLink's 2003 Transit Related Road Infrastructure Program.

Conclusion

As part of the on-going implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan, TransLink plans to introduce a community shuttle service in December 2003 between Steveston and Riverport via Moncton Street, Railway Avenue, Williams Road, Shell Road, and Steveston Highway. TransLink, jointly with City staff, has completed a public consultation process on the proposed service plan and has received positive feedback on the planned routing and operating characteristics of the service. Staff therefore recommend that the proposed service plan of the Williams Road Community Shuttle and the use of Railway Avenue (Moncton Street to Williams Road), Williams Road (Railway Avenue to Garden City Road) and Shell Road (Williams Road to Steveston Highway) for the new service be endorsed.



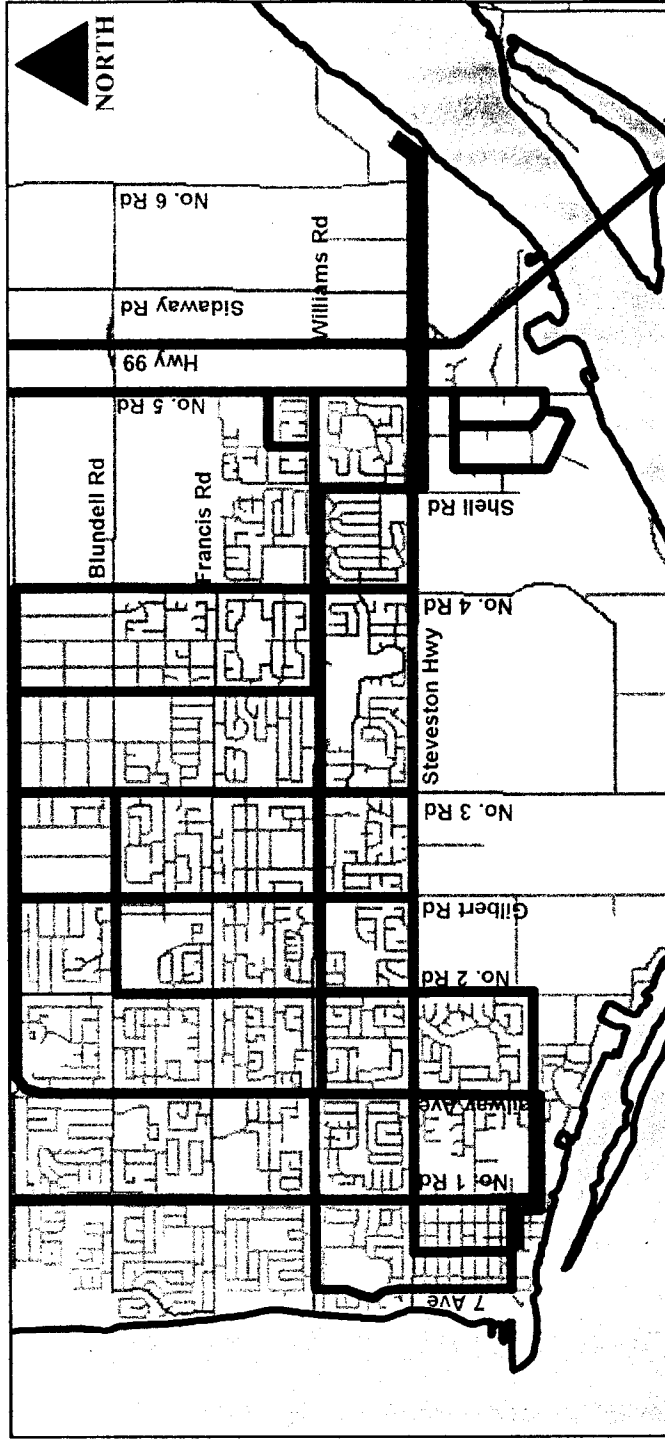
Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner
(4035)

JC:lce

Proposed Route and Schedule Richmond Community Shuttle – Via Williams Road

Proposed Service Frequency

- Every 30 Minutes
Steveston to Riverport
- Weekdays 8:30am to 7:00pm
 - Saturdays 9:00am to 7:00pm
 - Sun/Hols 10:00am to 7:00pm
- Evening Service
- Fridays 7:00pm to 11:00pm
 - Saturdays 7:00pm to 11:00pm



Comments Received on Proposed Williams Road Community Shuttle Service

- Need a seat outside the bicycle shop at the bus stop in Steveston for sometimes having to wait up to 15 minutes - especially when drivers leave bus to go to bathroom
- Needs to be very accessible for scooters, etc. Kneeling bus if possible.
- Being put on hold when trying to book handydart is very disconcerting. Need another or one more person perhaps to handle bookings. Better time constraints for easier booking rather than four days prior.
- As Hugh McRoberts is a combined French-English school, many of the students come from the Homma catchment area (near Moncton and Railway). There is currently no bus service along Williams, which has created worse traffic problems of any school in Richmond. Please start the service as soon as possible - by September 7 would be great.
- I agree completely with Community concerns you have heard: lack of east-west; more direct local service; not all routing through Richmond Centre; and use of smaller busses makes a lot of sense if low ridership is the case.
- I like the speed of the #98 B-Line when I have to go downtown (would like them to be in service from Richmond Centre to end of their line as well).
- Overall I support this initiative to provide a much needed east-west connection between Steveston and Riverport. Instead of the Shell Rd routing, consider routing both ways along Seacote/King/No 5 Rd or even Shell Rd E/King/No 5 Rd (to capture Athabasca/Ashcroft markets). At the same time, reroute 401/488 buses both ways along Williams between Shell and No 5 Rds. In any case, No 5 Rd is better for accessing places of worship. Shell Rd E south of Williams is blocked from Shell Rd W by the ditch and train tracks - only one pedestrian bridge.
- Please start using Williams Rd as a timing point for all Richmond buses crossing it, starting with the fall service timetables.
- Routing – As it stands, the routing along Williams is the best option, linking Steveston with Riverport. However, there is some duplication of service, most of which cannot be avoided. I would like to suggest that in order to reduce the portions of the route to be served by two or three routes, that the service in Steveston follow a slightly different routing. Instead of running along Moncton Street, which is already served by the 402, 490 and 492, why not run the shuttle along Garry Street between One Road and Railway? There are a couple of good reasons to do this. 1) This street is currently not served by transit. 2) There are two major destinations on this street: McMath High School (700 students) and the Steveston Buddhist Temple. By routing the shuttle north on One Road, east on Garry, and then north on Railway, you would still be serving customers on that portion of Railway with no service now, reducing duplication of service on Moncton, and serving two new destinations on Garry.
- Frequency of Service – I would hope that the proposed 30 minute interval is temporary and subject to review sooner rather than later. If the service is successful, the small shuttle buses will not be able to handle the passenger loads, especially on weekends. Please ensure that service is not reduced on weekends when Riverport is an extremely popular destination.